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## *OLIVIA*

BY

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HENRY IRVING

MISS

ELLEN TERRY





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EAGER for an explanation as to why a successful poet, playwright and journalist should have become an authority on the toilet, a London "Daily Mail" representative sought out Mr. Geo. R. Sims at Opposite-the-Ducks Villa, and asked him point blank if it were true that he had forsaken the leafy paths of light literature for the concrete road of commerce.

Now, Mr. G. R. Sims, as many people know, is one of the busiest men in the kingdom, but hastily affixing his signature to a letter, he looked up and extended a characteristically cordial welcome. Then he said, "Of course, there is no truth in that; but as you have asked the question, I will explain how it is that my name has been adopted as the registered title of the Hair Restorer Company. In '86 I found that I was rapidly going bald. Not seriously, you understand, but the thinning out was sufficiently marked to set me thinking out a remedy. I went to two specialists, both of whom cheerfully assured me that I should be absolutely bald in two years.

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"Letters in thousands poured into me from men and women in every quarter of the world from all parts of the kingdom, from America, India, Africa, China, and Australia, and I am firmly convinced that if

ANDRÉE HAD REACHED THE POLE

and had facilities for communication, I should have received a request from him before this. The work of answering the letters was enormous, and as far as possible the desired information was supplied; but it became quite evident that at the rate at which the demand was increasing I should very soon need a large staff of clerks to attend solely to the hair restorer department of correspondence.

"In consequence, I said to myself, Why should this thing go on? If the public wants my hair restorer, the public shall have it; but the demand must be met in the ordinary business-like way. Moreover, I was led to that determination by the frequent evidence of so-called hair restorers that purported to be 'as recommended by Mr. G. R. Sims.' Now you know if that sort of thing had been allowed to go on, 50,000 vengeful people would have been hunting for me, and at the same time proclaiming to the world that my recipe was worthless. So I resolved to place the genuine article, under the name of 'Tatcho,' which is the Romany word for 'genuine,' within reach of all, and with the assistance of a number of gentlemen possessing the necessary commercial facilities, that has been accomplished.

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AT Easter, 1844, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley undertook the management. They had the support of the best and lightest writers—Albert Smith, Mark Lemon, Charles Kenney, and others, and the friendly help of Charles Dickens.

They carried on the Theatre brilliantly for three years, but the financial "backer," Mr. Strutt, although the rent in those days was only £2,500 a year, was not satisfied, and the Keeleys gave place to Charles Mathews—our "Charley"—and his wife, Madame Vestris. The management was the most alert and intelligent that ever conducted a London Theatre. It lasted eight years, and yet Mathews was considered volatile! It gave Planché permanent work, and, with the aid of Beverley, the great scenic artist, it invented "transformation scenes." This may or may not have been a benefit to the stage, but no matter. Good taste always reigned supreme, and there was no vulgarity in the outlay. The Lyceum had triple bills, quadruple bills, and even quintuple bills, and it varied these with dramas, like the "Pride of the Market," which was in a dozen acts, and played the whole evening. The great *tour de force* that was made during this memorable management was the production of the "Game of Speculation"—an adaptation of Balzac's "Mercadet," which cannot be bettered. It was translated, adapted, rehearsed and acted in sixty hours—George Henry Lewes being the author. No other theatre, no other company, no other manager and no other author could have done it in the time and established such a "record." It beats horseracing.

The management of Charles Fechter, which lasted for four years, was second only in brilliancy to the reign of Charles Mathews. Allowing for a little French accent, Fechter was the finest romantic actor of the last half of the century. What financial assistance he wanted he got from his friend Charles Dickens, and not from Lady Coutts, as was generally supposed; and when he left England for America in 1867, he honourably paid back, in remittances from America, every farthing he had borrowed.

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 Scene. The Vicarage Garden - - - HAWES CRAVEN  
 ACT II.  
 Scene. The Vicarage Parlour - - - HAWES CRAVEN  
 ACT III.  
 Scene. The Dragon Inn - - - HAWES CRAVEN  
 ACT IV.  
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ENTR'ACTE	..	..	..	..	..	Bourrée and Gigue	..	..	..	..	Ed. German
ENTR'ACTE	..	..	..	{	(a) "Morris Dance"	}	..	..	..	..	J. Meredith Ball
ENTR'ACTE	..	..	..	{	(b) Danse Caractéristique, "My Lady Marjorie"		..	..	..	..	Ivan Tschakoff
ENTR'ACTE	..	..	..	..	..	"Cossack Revels"	..	..	..	..	

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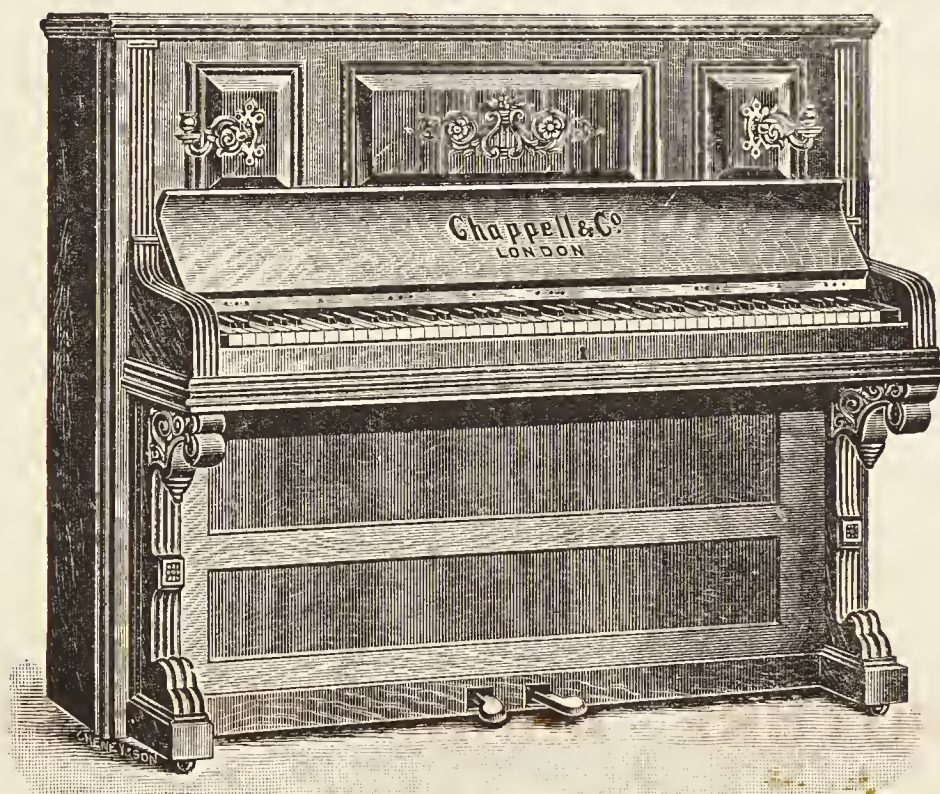


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